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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the planning and implementation of a foundation-sponsored fellowship program designed to provide urban secondary school principals with opportunities for inservice professional development. The discussion is presented in the form of a case study that uses data gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and participant observation to identify specific problems that hindered successful implementation of the program. Six major problem areas that affected program implementation are discussed, including failure to specify intended programmatic outcomes, lack of integration between program elements, the effects of "inertia," low enthusiasm during parts of the year, difficulties with the use of a formative evaluation capability, and the normative use of a "muddling through" strategy of program development. (Author/JG)

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The Implementation of a Program for the Professional Development of Urban Secondary School Principals

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Within the last five or six years, researchers have begun to pay explicit attention to the processes involved in the implementation of educational programs. One strand of this research has been pursued by students of planned organizational change. Working from a social-psychological perspective, these researchers have moved beyond a preoccupation with the diffusion and adoption of innovations and have focused on "the small and mundane as well as the large and important issues and problems necessary for idealistic practitioners to carry out their dreams" (Smith and Keith, 1971, p. iv). A second strand, using a political science perspective, has been concerned with the problem of translating governmental policies into workable programs. A third strand has grown out of attempts to evaluate innovative educational programs. Evaluators have come to realize that programs cannot be faulted for failing to achieve intended outcomes if, in fact, they have not been successfully implemented.

Representative of the implementation studies are those by Charters and Pellegrin (1972), Gross, Giacquinta and Bernstein (1971), Reynolds (1973) and Smith and Keith (1971). These studies and others, have identified a number of hindrances to successful implementation: abstract or overly ambitious objectives, the failure to incorporate user input into goal formulation, a tendency to avoid detailed planning, inadequate resources, a failure to appreciate the difficulty of learning new roles, management's failure to help staff deal with the problems of implementation, difficulties of maintaining motivation during the trials of implementation and ineffective monitoring and feedback mechanisms. This writer's synthesis of the case studies dealing with program implementation is in press.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to what is known about the implementation process--to add new dimensions to the concepts and hypotheses generated by other researchers and to suggest additional ones. In particular, the intention is to identify problem areas that program managers can take into consideration, and over which they can exert some control, during program planning and implementation. A brief description of the program studied will precede a presentation of programmatic outcomes and an analysis of factors that influenced implementation.

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The Urban School Administrators Fellowship Program

The data for this study come from a Foundation-sponsored Fellowship program designed to provide in-service professional development opportunities to principals of secondary schools in large cities (average city population, 490,000). The Quiller* Foundation's Urban School Administrators Fellowship Program is currently in its third year--60 principals are, or have been, "Quiller Fellows."

As originally conceived

> The Quiller Foundation (QF) would sponsor a nine-month internship for persons qualified for high school administration but who have not yet so served.
>
> This proposed program would seek to combine the new efforts of departments of education, available talent in the school and the greater community to provide a better procedure for preparing high school administrators.
>
> The assumption is that the Quiller Foundation... can improve the procedure for training school administrators, can contribute to the pool of qualified principals and can influence the preparation of persons for principalships in the future. (Program proposal)

As it turned out, however, the internship became a Fellowship program when the invited school systems expressed an interest in giving their current administrators an opportunity for professional development. At the start of the program's first year, then, each of the participating school systems was represented by five secondary school principals.

In essence, the program consisted of three interrelated components. An inter-city component, involving all the Fellows, consisted of a four-day residential workshop in August, meetings in each of the program cities and attendance at the ASCD convention. An intra-city component was designed to give each city group of five Fellows the opportunity to address concerns specific to to that city. "Local coordinators" (university professors) were employed on a one-fifth time basis to support the activities of the five Fellows in each city. Although each city group "went its own way," intra-city activities consisted mainly of half-day meetings, sometimes with a formal presentation on a topic of interest and usually including lunch or dinner. Finally, an individual component was included in the program in order to allow each

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*A fictitious name used to preserve anonymity.

Fellow the opportunity to address a particular need or interest. This component made it possible for the Fellows to attend national or regional conventions, workshops, seminars or institutes. In addition, a portion of the time available to each Fellow for program activities was to be used in developing a project in his school. The "projects" were to consist of the selection of a significant problem and then the design, implementation and evaluation of a solution to that problem.

Each Fellow retained full responsibility for his administrative duties but was authorized by his school system to use one day per week for program activities. In addition to his regular salary paid by the school system, each Fellow received a stipend in recognition of time spent in the summer and on weekends. Each city group of five Fellows had $5000 to support intra-city activities and to allow the Fellows to attend workshops or seminars. Finally, each Fellow could spend up to $250 on his individual project.

I functioned as half of a two-man central coordinating team for the Fellowship program. As such I had access to all program documents and to responses on periodic structured feedback instruments. I conducted formal interviews with each program participant at the mid-point and at the end of the program. In addition, observations and the content of some informal conversations were recorded regularly. The data for this study come from the program's first year.

Programmatic Outcomes

At the end of the program the first-year Fellows were unanimous in rating the program an excellent vehicle for the in-service professional development of school administrators. They attested to benefits in two inter-related categories--benefits for themselves personally and benefits for their schools and school systems.

There seemed to be three main clusters of personal gains. First, the Fellows became more "cosmopolitan." They shared perspectives and values concerning a wide array of issues associated with urban secondary schools, especially the administration of those schools. They broadened what they knew about the educational problems of large cities--including their own city. And they learned about alternative solutions to those problems. Second, some Fellows attested to gaining specific skills. These included alternative ways of working with students, improved ability to work with an administrative team, becoming aware of the necessity to involve others in decision-making, etc. Third, the Fellows attested to "personal growth." "I became more conscious of my own deficiencies." "I acquired a greater desire to compete." "My enthusiasm for the job was rekindled." "Participation in the program increased my professional self-concept." "It gave me time to think." "It gave me a chance to examine my own personal goals."

There were also gains for schools and school systems. At one level, schools and school systems could only profit by more competent, more enthusiastic principals. At a second level, some principals could point to specific new programs that they started and that they attributed to their participation in the program. These ranged from a year-long program of orientation for new teachers in a school to a new foreign language program to a newly organized administrative team. At a third level, the Fellows in a city got to know each other better and developed a sense of mutual respect and colleagueship. One Fellow said, "I have made four new personal and professional friends who are fellow principals in my school system." Another commented: "We are probably more supportive of one another and our various school programs." As a result of this new "closeness" of principals within a school system there was more of a readiness to share ideas and to work cooperatively. On a fourth level, some principals attested to new status that could be used to exert district wide leadership. Some commented that they got to know their superintendents better. In addition, the Fellowship experience apparently sparkplugged a movement to give secondary principals a more significant voice within at least one district.

Despite the positive outcomes indicated above, it can also be said that the QF program did not fulfill its potential as an in-service professional development program for secondary school administrators. This conclusion is based on the under-utilization of resources available to the Fellows. As indicated above, the Fellowship program provided each Fellow with resources of time, money, access to expertise and access to a support system to be used for professional development. These resources were under-utilized during the Fellowship year. According to their own accounts, The Fellows spent an average of 20 of the authorized 36 days on program related activities. The average amount of time spent by the coordinators on program activities was even less. City-group and project funds were not exhausted. In one city no Fellows attended workshops or conferences on an individual basis. Staff resources were similarly under-utilized. In particular, Fellows received little help on their projects from the local coordinators. In one of the cities, meetings of the five Fellows with the coordinator were infrequent and unproductive. The inter-city meetings were devoted largely to school visits--an activity that was perceived by the Fellows as not very valuable.

Three major, interrelated, "reasons" for the under-utilization of resources can be identified. One reason for the under-utilization of resources was a low level of trust between Fellows and staff. The trust problem distracted Fellows from more substantive issues. Both total-group and city-group meeting time was devoted to this trust issue to the exclusion of other topics. More importantly, the issue provided an excuse when Fellows were confronted by their inability to implement projects. Instead of trying to deal with implementation difficulties, some Fellows vented their frustrations through the trust issue. The low level of trust also led to problems with utilizing evaluation and to viewing the program director as an authority figure rather than as a resource.

A second reason, low enthusiasm, meant that some of the Fellows did not expend much time and energy on implementation of their projects. In addition, several Fellows did not make serious efforts to locate and attend workshops or seminars on topics of personal interest. On the part of the local coordinators, low enthusiasm was expressed in minimal preparation for city-group meetings and in a failure to actively provide the Fellows with help on the projects.

A third reason for the under-utilization of resources was that program activities were not integrated with each other. Because the individual, city-group and total-group activities were not integrated with each other, there was little reinforcement of, or support for, what was going on at one level by what was taking place at the other two levels. Individual projects were not supported at city-group meetings or at total-group meetings. Similarly, the tasks undertaken by the city groups were not supported or reinforced at the level of the total group.

Factors Influencing Program Implementation

The sections that follow will examine the above three "reasons" in more detail. Following that, three more basic, underlying, reasons for problems with implementation will be examined. Implications for program planners and managers will be contained throughout.

A low level of trust. One of the purposes of the August workshop was to develop preliminary plans for the Fellowship year. As the program director noted in a staff memo after the workshop:

> To the extent that this program has a design, it has rested thus far on the premise that the Fellows are in the best position to define their concerns, that the Fellows are in the best position to design projects and that the staff's task is to stimulate and support such activities.... My concern is that the Fellows may not have perceived or accepted our own view of our roles. I had the feeling that some thought we had the answers and were holding them back. (Memo from Program Director to coordinators, dated August 31)

The direction of the program was largely determined at the August workshops--but largely determined without explicit input from the Fellows. The structure of the workshop, its content, and various attendance circumstances, played a determinative role in shaping the direction of the program.

First, our early communication to the Fellows about the program and the initial workshop was deficient. Some Fellows did not know about the stipend, other knew "very little" and "really had to guess" about what they were getting into. For a time, at least, one Fellow thought he was a part of

another program with which he was acquainted. In addition, most of the Fellows were unprepared for the totally isolated setting of the workshop. Probably the most significant consequence of this early lack of information was not the inconvenience but the attitude conveyed to the Fellows. According to the end of the year interviews, a number felt that they were pawns in the hands of the staff; that they were being "used" and that they were not considered as equals.

Second, several factors contributed to a "gap" between Fellows and staff. All the staff members were University based and had relatively little experience administering urban high schools. What little we had was not communicated to the Fellows. Further, all the staff members were White in a program in which more than half of the Fellows were Black. To top it off, there were separate living quarters for Fellows and staff at the workshop and staff meetings were held without representation from the Fellows. As one Fellow commented later, "We didn't know what the staff was talking about when you got together in your cottage."

Third, expectations regarding "doing a project" were not clarified. A rationale for "doing projects" was presented at the workshop along with "possible project characteristics," but a lack of discussion about the project concept seems to have led to a lack of real commitment on the part of the Fellows. More than half of the Fellows experienced trouble with the projects and eventually dropped active work on them. Before mid-year, in fact, frustration with the projects led to downplaying their centrality in the program. "Growing professionally," referring to a general exposure to educational ideas and issues especially through such devices as attendance at professional conferences and workshops, school visits and interaction with other educators, took its place.

Fourth, financial guidelines were left up in the air and would not be clarified until two months into the program. Before clarification, however, one Fellow attended a workshop and incurred unusually large expenses prompting a memo concerning "exotic meals." The term became a watch-word in the program. Besides being the topic of a number of humorous exchanges there was a serious side. One Fellow, for example, revealed late in the program that he had been carrying around a meal receipt for several months--afraid to submit it for fear he would be accused of having an "exotic meal."

All of this seemed to coalesce into what one city group referred to as a "low level of trust" between staff and Fellows. The roots were sown at the August workshop and earlier--by the end of October the issue was full-blown. The minutes of a city-group meeting on November 15 contained "trust level" as the first entry. The main issue was that the Fellows felt there were unspecified objectives they were expected to attain and unspecified criteria by which they would be judged--despite statements by staff that there were no predetermined program goals. The trust issue also occupied

a major portion of an inter-city meeting.

The major point of the above is that some important norms and sentiments present within the Fellows throughout the program were largely determined by events of the first week of the program. The initial relationship between staff and Fellows, the early lack of financial guidelines, the nebulousness of the projects were never corrected. In part, this was due to the lack of time available to be spent on establishing new norms and new sentiments. Yet even with time the task would have been formidable because of the inertia of the original experiences. In a sense, a program cannot escape its own early history. In this case, the result seems to have been a preoccupation with the trust issue and the burdensomeness of the projects--to the exclusion of more productive uses of the resources available in the program. More generally, the experience indicates the importance of "getting off on the right foot."

Problems with maintaining enthusiasm. During the Fellowship year, the enthusiasm of the Fellows and staff for participating in the program did not remain constant. As the final interviews indicated, there were times when the average enthusiasm level was relatively high and other times when it was relatively low.

Having been chosen to participate in the program served in itself to establish and maintain the enthusiasm of at least some of the Fellows. For one, it was "the first time in twenty years in education that people have come to me and said how can we be of help." Other enthusiasm raisers were the opportunity to visit other cities and to attend national conferences and workshops, in short, to move beyond the confines of a particular city and to experience the new and different. Enthusiasm was also raised when individuals or city groups worked on a task they felt was important and when success and accomplishment were felt.

> My enthusiasm was highest at the end of the program because psychologically we found we needed to get ourselves involved next year. We rallied around writing proposals to other agencies, attempting to finish. We wanted to continue next year because we had invested a lot of time already. (A Fellow in the final interview.)

But there were also enthusiasm depressors. In fact, the average enthusiasm level was higher during the August workshop than it was for the next seven months. One reason, of course, was the beginning of the problems with trust between staff and Fellows. Another reason was an initial period of "floundering" between the workshop and the first inter-city meeting. The floundering was at least partly by design in order to give the Fellows time

> to make progress in the process of personal goal-setting. They should formulate questions; we'll get resources to them.

> Having experts in urban education would give them the answers. I'd like them to request training in goalsetting. That's one of our goals. We can find out how they decide to spend their money. (Program director as recorded in Field notes dated September 25.)

The result of the floundering, however, was less a coming to grips with what individuals and city-groups wanted to make of the program and more a failure to capitalize on the relatively high level of enthusiasm with which the Fellows left the August workshop. The absence of a short-term goal--to be accomplished by individuals and groups by the end of September--seems to be the major culprit. In the words of one of the Fellows, "At (the first inter-city meeting) I wondered what the hell we were doing."

In the final interviews almost one-half of the Fellows attributed the low points in their enthusiasm, at least in part, to problems with the projects. Besides the general frustration felt at not being able to accomplish what one set out to do, there was another dimension: the perceived pressure to produce felt by some of the Fellows. As an example, one Fellow attributed his low enthusiasm to the "weight of the project hanging over my head. (The local coordinator) tried to get me into a new project, but I couldn't get it out of my head that I had to produce."

The middle of the school year also contributed to dampened enthusiasm.

> The middle of the program seemed to lag. The same format became routine and boring. (Fellow in final interview)

> After Christmas the whole system, including myself was in the doldrums. I think that affected me and some of the Fellows. (Local Coordinator in final interview)

One of the characteristics of the "doldrums" was that the one-day per week provision of the program dissolved into something closer to one day per month. A similar problem befell staff meetings. After the August workshop, the staff met only once prior to the middle of March.

There was another circumstance that affected two of the local cooordinators. One started out the year on sabbatical but because of events within his department cut his leave short and returned to full-time work as department chairman. In the final interview he commented that his enthusiasm was highest in the fall when he had more time.

> I do not feel I can do both program and department head well. Thinking time is cut down. It's a chore to even steal a couple of hours to prepare and submit minutes and expense forms.

On the other hand, the second coordinator began a sabbatical midway through the year and consequently had more time to devote to the program despite not being able to get completely away from his university work. During this period his city-group was easily the most active.

If the assumption that links enthusiasm to taking full advantage of the resources of the program is valid, then one of the tasks of program managers is to assure a high level of enthusiasm throughout the course of a program. The data point to two methods of securing high enthusiasm among program participants. The first is to provide intermediate goals toward which program participants can aim--and experience some success. The second is to provide occasional breaks in the routine, to provide a change of pace.

Poorly integrated program activities. As implied above, one cause of low enthusiasm was that the Fellows had little sense of being involved in a coherent program, i.e., a set of integrated activities leading to a specific goal. The field notes of the program director, written when he attended the first city-group meeting in one of the cities, speak to the issue:

> Someone asks: why are we having a meeting of all the city-groups. One Fellow recalls that it was to share progress reports; the others say they don't recall that. (I squirm: the rationale, at the August workshop, as I recall it, might best be construed as the summer school/high school "let's get together for a reunion" theme, which seems right when uttered, but soon seems hollow. So we have a meeting scheduled, but no agenda.) (Program director's field notes dated August 24)

Program activities were not integrated with each other, in part because the coordinators had not common conception of program goals or of their own roles within the program. Consequently, they followed idiosyncratic paths at the city-group level based on their own concerns and styles. In one city, where the local coordinator was non-directive in his approach, the city group meetings were infrequent and relatively non-productive. An entry in the minutes of one of their meetings seven months into the program noted: "Observation was made that attendance at our called meetings has not been good." In a second city, the meetings were held regularly at the faculty club where the local coordinator was a professor. Each meeting was characterized by a carefully specified agenda, sometimes agreed on beforehand during a conference phone call originated by the local coordinator. The agenda was written on a flip chart carried to the session by the coordinator. Over the course of the year, attendance at these meetings was almost 100%. In a third city the coordinator conceived of the program along the lines of a traditional internship. The meetings were held in each others' schools featuring discussions with central office personnel or with consultants on specific topics.

While it was desired, and desirable, that diversity among cities be recognized and allowed to influence the programmatic content at the city level it was also necessary that there be some commonality among cities and individuals in order to provide a focus for the total endeavor, that is, in order to have a coherent program. However, little time was devoted to coming to consensus regarding the staff's understanding of program goals and their own roles.

The staff meeting before the August workshop attacked the question of the role of the local coordinator head on, but only briefly. The field notes made during the meeting contain the following rather elliptical reference to the discussion:

> The role of the local coordinator: it is wide open right now. They are to emphasize projects--insure they're well defined, help them get implemented, relay resource needs to us. The project is not the only activity but a major activity. Local coordinators should capitalize on opportunities. (Field Notes dated July 31)

There was, however, no discussion of concrete methods for carrying out the coordinator role. Consequently, each coordinator was left with his own repertoire of approaches, unenlarged by discussion and uncriticized by debate. Following the Oakwood workshop the staff met formally only two times during the rest of the Fellowship year. There was no real attempt, therefore, to establish, in the minds of the staff members, a common conception of the program and of the relationship between the various components of the program. The program continued without this common conception throughout the year.

As the year progressed, the Fellowship program became more and more a collection of city-group programs. These city-group meetings did not provide mechanisms for holding the Fellows to the task of "doing a project" and did not provide the technical support needed to insure project implementation. By the end of October the project idea was no longer viable as the basic unifying element in the program. In fact, nothing was--and the total-group meetings proceeded without any unifying theme except that of visits to each other's schools. Preliminary plans for the January inter-city meeting included only a small amount of time for the total group to meet. The local coordinator explained that his Fellows, who were planning the meeting, "didn't know how any additional time could be filled up" (Field notes dated January 12).

What was missing from the program was a series of preliminary staff meetings for the purpose of clarifying the program's goals or for reformulating those goals to more adequately reflect the desires

a[illegible]needs of the staff. Such meetings could also have served as a vehicle for the clarification, or reformulation, of the staff person's role within the program. Frequent and sufficiently long staff meetings during the program would also seem to be necessary in order to have the opportunity to clarify or reformulate goals and roles based on actual experience within the program.

To summarize to this point: the under-utilization of resources has been attributed to a low level of enthusiasm during part of the program, to a low level of trust between staff and Fellows and to a low level of integration among program activities. At a more basic level, however, three factors contributed to low enthusiasm, low trust and low integration of activities. Those factors: intended programmatic outcomes, stated in behavioral terms, were never specified; we relied on a muddling through strategy of program development; and our formative evaluation capability did not contribute to significant program improvement. As with the initial three factors, these basic three are interrelated.

The failure to specify intended programmatic outcomes. The program staff met the Fellows for the first time (at the initial four-day residential workshop in August) with only a "rough plan or strategy" to present to them. Essentially, the project idea was to be "the basis for organizing the year." An open-ended proposal, the change from Internship to Fellowship and the program director's commitment to a strategy of involving the Fellows in determining the structure of the program all contributed to the lack of definite goals and means as the Fellowship year began.

The trouble we had with determining goals is indicated in excerpts from field notes and memos. At a session with representatives of the participating school systems in April, the program director began with: I'm looking for an operational way of describing what we're about. "I'm looking for objectives for the program." The ensuing discussion did not reach closure. In mid-May, a group of national "experts" on administrator training was convened to get their advice on program development. During the meeting one consultant commented: "It worries me that all this money is committed to this and no plan is fixed." We also met twice with the local coordinators for one-day planning sessions in June and July. Two sentences from a memo I wrote to the program director following the first meeting give testimony to the problems.

> I think it's important, if we're going to go with the project model, that the local coordinators be sold on that model and know thoroughly what it means operationally. (That goes for you and me also.)

In sum, there never was an unambiguous statement of intended programmatic outcomes phrased in terms of what a Fellow would be like after completing the Fellowship year.

A major objective of the August workshop was to involve the Fellows in the development of specific plans for the year. In the absence of clear-cut program goals, however, the Fellows had little they could plan for except the projects themselves. "Doing a project" almost became synonymous with being a Fellow. Planning for individual projects did take place during the workshop but plans for city-group and total-group meetings were not well developed and these components were not integrated with the projects. The role of the coordinators in relation to the projects was also not clear.

Beginning the program without clear-cut program goals had ramifications throughout the year. The Fellows constantly searched for what was expected of them--and, for the most part, turned up empty-handed. Not being able to find out what was expected of them contributed to a lack of trust on the part of some of the Fellows toward the staff. When the project idea as a central element was all but abandoned after two months, the program continued without a unifying theme. Individual attendance at workshops or seminars, city-group and total-group meetings continued but without being informed by, or directed toward, any overarching programmatic goals.

Without a picture or image of what a Fellow would be like at the end of the program year there was nothing the Fellows could aim at, nothing to motivate enthusiastic participation in the program. Further, expectations were unclear both for Fellows and local coordinators. And the absence of clearly defined intended programmatic outcomes precluded the integration of activities around such intended outcomes.

Limitations of "Muddling Through." From time to time during the course of the Fellowship year the Program director characterized the program development process we were using as one of "muddling through." The term comes from Lindblom (1959) who described the way policies are formulated (and decisions made) as "muddling through." In Lindblom's theory, policies are not made "rationally" and comprehensively; rather new policy builds on current policy by small increments, in a step-by-step fashion. The term "muddling through" was used in this technical sense.

As a description of our approach to program planning and development, the theory of "muddling through" fits rather well. First, only a few alternative program designs were considered--and these never in full-blown forms. The ultimate design developed out of the program director's experience with other programs and also built incrementally on "standard" internships in educational administration. Second, only some consequences of pursuing alternative program designs were considered. For example, we considered the consequences attendant on success with the projects and planned from the start to facilitate sharing among Fellows, with the school systems and with the professional generally.

The frustration that accompanied failure to implement projects was not anticipated and consequently no provisions were made for dealing with it.

Third, we planned from the beginning to constantly monitor the program and adjust its means and ends in the light of evaluative findings. This is most clearly seen as we progressed from year one to year two but even within the first program year the same process is evident. When the projects proved an obstacle to some of the Fellows a decision was made to de-emphasize "doing a project" in favor of the less threatening "professional development." This decision also illustrates the phenomenon of making choices to alleviate identified ills rather than to promote a well-defined future state.

In part, muddling through was forced on us by the necessity of working with several school systems and by time and other constraints. However, a part of the "muddling" was by design. Because we were starting the program from scratch we were conscious of the need to modify the program as the year progressed. We were willing to adjust as the need presented itself. In addition, we feit that it was essential that the Fellows provide input into the program.

But there were some adverse consequences that developed because we "muddled through" the program. The continual adjustment of ends to means and the other way around resulted in undefined program goals, means masquerading as goals and a set of unintegrated program elements. Each of these consequences had adverse effects. First, the lack of definitive program goals was a major contributor to the trust problem that surfaced at the summer workshop. The Fellows figured the staff had firm program objectives and were frustrated because they couldn't discover them. Second, "doing a project" became the goal of the program in the eyes of the Fellows. When difficulties with project implementation developed, "doing a project" was de-emphasized and the program was left with no unifying element. Third, the one day per week time allotment, the projects, the availability of co-ordinators and the three levels of program activity (individual city-groups, total-group) were never integrated.

Another facet of the remedial orientation of "muddling through" is the "never ending series of attacks" on a problem through serial analyses and evaluation. A formative evaluation component was built into the Quiller Foundation program precisely to provide the capability of improving the program as the year progressed. However, as indicated below, problems generating valid data and problems making use of the evaluative findings developed.

The phenomenon identified by the physical concept of inertia represents the major drawback to our use of "muddling through" as a normative model for program development. One of the characteristics of "muddling through" is its remedial orientation. I noted above the power of initial experiences

for shaping the subsequent direction of the program. For example, the early lack of financial guidelines, although later corrected, led to problems with funds that lasted throughout the year. Similarly, the early relationship that developed between Fellows and staff at the August workshop had its problematic aspects throughout the year. In effect, remediation was next to impossible within the first program year.

Problems utilizing a formative evaluation capability. Problems can be expected in the first year of any program and, as the sections above indicated, the QF program was no exception. But we were prepared; an effort was made to monitor the program through periodic interviews and structured feedback instruments. However, the existence of a formative evaluation capability was not sufficient either for discovering the problems early enough or for initiating intervention strategies that could have changed the direction of the program during its first year.

We encountered some problems in our attempt to gather valid and useful evaluative data. The main difficulty occurred over questionnaire items that dealt with city-group meetings and the work of the coordinators. These items drew almost uniformly positive responses. One example: "(Our coordinator) has done everything requested by staff, and administration." Both the pattern of responses and the off-the-record comments of two Fellows later in the year made it clear that they "were not about to say anything negative" about their coordinators. Close relationships--at least working relationships--were developing between the Fellows and their local coordinators. Our requests for information violated these relationships.

Despite difficulties in getting good information, some valid and useful data were obtained during the course of the program. However, that data did not contribute to program improvement during the first year. One of the problems in the arrangements for making use of evaluative findings was the absence, throughout most the year, of regularly scheduled sessions in which those findings could be considered. Staff meetings were non-existent during the middle of the program and, although questionnaire results were tabulated and returned to the Fellows, at most of the inter-city meetings no time was allocated to discuss the responses or to consider program modifications based on the evaluative findings.

A related reason why evaluative feedback did not get used was a lack of focus in the presentation of the findings. Even a four page document proved too long and too diffuse to encourage discussion of the findings and possible solutions for problematic situations. With hindsight, it can be said that an in-depth consideration of only one or two findings from the responses to the questionnaire following the

August workshop may have changed the program. The availability, but non-use of a score of findings served no useful purpose.

The monitoring of the program did seem to bear some fruit, however. In the short run, mid-course alterations were effected when receptivity to intervention could be capitalized on and when intervention was timed to coincide with natural turning points in the program. For example, the pattern within one city was altered when the local coordinator, who was depressed about the way the program was developing in that city, was given some suggestions based on feedback from the Fellows in that city. (Interestingly, the feedback and suggestions were given in a corner bar, over a couple of beers, and later on the street corner, itself.)

In the long run, and in the context of the program continuing over several years, it is fair to say that formative evaluation did have an impact. The end of one year and the beginning of another is, of course, a natural turning point. Change is expected. The second year Fellows encountered an extensively redesigned program based on the first year's experience. To be sure, there were mistakes made during the second year. Some of the first year's problems were never corrected and some new ones cropped up that were never solved. But, in general, the second year profited from feedback from the first year's operation.

Within the first Fellowship year, however, the formative evaluation capability did not contribute significantly to integrating program elements, to raising the level of trust between Fellows and staff or to establishing and maintaining a high level of enthusiasm.

The implications of this study for program managers exist on two levels. On one level, there are things a program manager can do to maintain a high level of enthusiasm or to provide for staff development or to insure that formative evaluation findings get included in decision-making sessions. On a second level, the underlying reasons for the problems we encountered during program implementation imply that program managers ought to be wary about consciously adopting a "muddling through" approach to program planning and implementation - at least as that strategy was used for the QF program.

The data of this study suggest two hypotheses. First, if intended programmatic outcomes are specified, then program resources will be more effectively and efficiently utilized. Second, if the consequences of alternative courses of action are considered during planning, then program resources will be more effectively and efficiently utilized. In the form of recommendations, the two hypotheses suggest that program managers adopt an approach to program planning and implementation that is characterized by <u>elements</u> of "rational" planning.

These recommendations stop considerably short of suggesting that program managers adopt a "rational" approach to program development. As Taylor (1965) notes, the classical, "rational," theory of decision-making is predicated on the decision-maker's ability to clarify values, to generate a complete list of alternatives and their consequences, to evaluate the consequences in the light of objectives, and then, to be able to order the alternatives on some scale of priorities. This decision-making strategy is clearly impossible with programs, and in contexts, similar to the program and context considered in this study. But it is possible to specify in some detail intended program outcomes, and it is possible to consider some alternative courses of action and to anticipate some consequences of these alternatives--especially the consequences of the alternative actually chosen. Short of assuming that the worst will happen, it seems feasible to at least simulate the various programmatic components so dysfunctions don't catch managers off guard. Playing out what could happen under a particular plan should help uncover additional goals and should serve to highlight possible costs and benefits.

But there are still problems with the recommendations. In the first place, in recent years they have become little more than cliches. As a consequence, their power for influencing practice has been reduced considerably. In the second place, "rational" planning connotes a rigidity, an emphasis on measurable quantities and an increased bureaucratization that is antithetical to movements to humanize education and to management theory that stresses involvement of program participants.

My response to these problems is two-fold. First, the implications of the data are clear. Program implementation will experience avoidable difficulties if intended outcomes are not specified in some detail and if efforts are not made to anticipate the consequences of alternative courses of action. Second, the preceding statement is not meant to imply that program participants be excluded from goal-setting and planning. There are empirical studies (cf. Fullan, 1972) that trace problems of implementation to failures to involve participants in program planning. In addition, of course, there are value considerations when dealing with other persons. The recommendations to adopt elements of a "rational" strategy of program planning and implementation, therefore, do not stand alone.

On the other hand, two bits of advice frequently given to managers who are beginning new programs ought not stand alone either. One bit of advice suggests that they recruit capable staff persons and then "leave them alone--don't get in the way." A second bit of advice suggests that they involve program participants in goal setting and decision-making. These may be good suggestions (my personal bias says they are) but more is needed if a program is to fulfill its potential. Involve program participants in goal setting and decision-making, and allow staff persons to "do their thing," but at the same time, make sure that eventually, goals and roles are stated clearly and understood and that an effort is made to look beyond the program's first day.

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